



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Enhancing Scholarship and Research at the Library of Congress

The Library of Congress remains committed to providing the highest degree of service to Congress, scholars and all of our patrons.

Contrary to recent concerns that have been raised, the European Reading Room of the Library of Congress will not be closed. Beginning this summer, the reading room will simply be relocated to the Southeast Pavilion, a space adjacent to the current reading room. This light-filled and domed room is situated adjacent to the European Division's staff colonnade in the southeast corner of the Jefferson Building.

We will sustain in the new configuration all scholarly usage that has been made available in the current configuration of the European Reading Room. There will be no loss or interruption of service, and ample room to accommodate the maximum number of readers that has ever used the current reading space. European Division staff will remain in their current space, and the knowledgeable staff in the European Reading Room will continue to be available to assist scholars and researchers. Researchers will be as close to the same resource materials and specialists as they were formerly.

Over the past 20 years, under the leadership of Librarian of Congress James H. Billington, we have greatly enhanced our services to the scholarly community. We have set up the first-ever set of separate reading rooms for every major continent of the world. We have extended and sustained the range and depth of our foreign-area collections despite many budgetary problems, and have launched a program that is greatly increasing the digital flow of scholarly material from a wide range of foreign libraries through our UNESCO-approved World Digital Library, making hitherto inaccessible foreign materials more widely available than ever before.

We have greatly increased and subsidized individual scholars both junior and senior, reconfiguring new space for scholarship in European history and culture within the new John W. Kluge Center. We have also continued and increased our regular free delivery of books on all international and national questions to other institutions.

Services to scholars are also a part of the new "Library of Congress Experience" that will open to the public on April 12, 2008. Also, some researchers and subject specialists are identifying research collections from other world libraries needed by scholarly users and developing plans for making those resources available on the Web. We are creating an Automated Call Slip system that will allow researchers to request materials in advance so that their requested items will be available for them when they arrive. The reference librarians are also working with scholars online to answer their questions and to assist them in their research. In the longer term, we are investigating the possibility of establishing a Center for Digital Scholarship in which scholars can study the influence of digital technology on teaching and learning.

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